



Kalispel Tribe of Indians
Kalispel Tribal Headquarters
Usk, WA 99180



Forest Service
Colville National Forest Newport
– Sullivan Lake Ranger Districts
Newport, WA 99156



**WA State Dept. Of
Natural Resources**
Northeast
Colville, WA 99114

File Code: 1950

Date: October 07, 2020

Dear Interested Party;

The Newport-Sullivan Lake Ranger Districts of the Colville National Forest (CNF) have prepared an environmental assessment (EA) for the Sx^wutyn-Kaniksu Connections ‘Trail’ Project. The project area covers approximately 90,700 acres just north of Newport bounded on the east by the Idaho Panhandle National Forest, the Pend Oreille River to the west and Middle Creek to the north. The EA is now available for a 30-day comment period. This letter provides a brief summary of the project and information on how to comment.

Purpose and Need for the Project

The purpose of this project is to improve forest health and resilience to disturbance; address insect and disease outbreaks; reduce the potential for future outbreaks; limit the severity of wildland fires; meet state and federal water quality guidelines; provide quality aquatic habitat; contribute to the local economy; and connect lands and people.

Proposed Action

The Project team analyzed one alternative that proposed forested areas to treat (e.g., treatment units), the type of vegetation treatments (e.g., under-burning with prescribed fire, pre-commercial thin, commercial harvest, ladder fuels reduction), what stream reaches and wetlands to treat (e.g., culvert removal or replacement, coarse woody debris placement); ways to connect people to their land (e.g., connecting trails, lake access, cultural uses, recreation) and what road treatments would enhance access for recreation, forest health, and wildlife habitat connectivity (e.g., management, maintenance, hydrologic stabilization, closure, obliteration).

The proposed action was developed jointly by the CNF, Kalispel Tribe of Indians, the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and through public input. Development was based on existing data, field reviews, and input from other sources (e.g., local collaborative groups, stakeholders, public, and other agencies).

The proposed action is described in detail in the Sx^wutyn-Kaniksu Connections ‘Trail’ Project Draft EA available at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=54315>.

How to Comment and Time Frame

The Draft Environmental Assessment is subject to notice and comments pursuant to 36 CFR 218. The comment period begins with publication of a legal notice in the *Newport Miner*, the newspaper of record. The notice is expected to appear in the **October 7, 2020** edition. Specific written comments concerning this action will be accepted for 30 calendar days following the publication of the legal notice. Regulations prohibit extending the length of the comment period.



Caring for the Land and Serving People

Specific written comments should be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and must include supporting reasons for the responsible official to consider (36 CFR 218.2). Your comments will be reviewed and considered prior to drafting a decision.

Electronic comments are preferred, submitted through the project website above. Other acceptable formats for submitting electronic comments include an email message in simple text or hypertext mark-up language (.html), or an email with an attached document in portable document format (.pdf) or Word (.doc, .docx), all sent to comments-pacificnorthwest-colville-newport@usda.gov.

The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means of calculating the comment period for this project. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. Call 509-447-7300 for questions about submitting comments.

It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period and to verify that electronically submitted comments have been received. If an autoreply from the electronic mail system is not received, feel free to contact Theresa Mathis at theresa.j.mathis@usda.gov for assistance.

Please submit your comments with your name and address, the title of the project, and specific comments on the proposed action, along with supporting reasons, that the responsible official should consider in reaching a decision.

Thank you for your interest and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



CARIN VADALA
District Ranger